

THE DISPATCH

The Civil War Round Table of New York, Inc.

Volume 61, No. 2

553rd Meeting

October 2011



• Guest:
John Quarstein
Battle at Big Bethel

• Cost:
Members: \$40
Non-Members: \$50

• Date:
Wednesday,
October 12th

• Place:
The Three West Club,
3 West 51st Street,

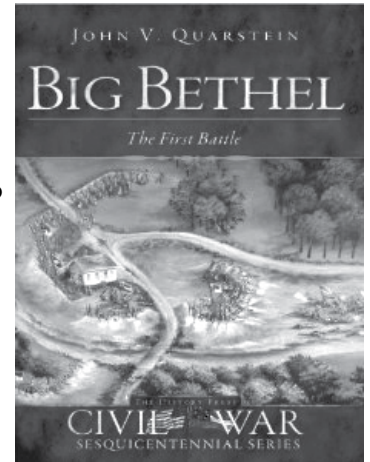
• Time:
Dinner at 6 pm,
Doors open 5:30 pm,
Cash Bar 5:30 – 7 pm

*You must call
718-341-9811 by
October 5th, if you
plan to attend the
October meeting.*

*We need to know how
many people to order
food for.*

John Quarstein Battle at Big Bethel

John V. Quarstein is an award winning historian, preservationist, and author, who has served as the director of the Virginia War Museum since 1978. He also oversees the management of the City of Newport News's historic properties including Endview Plantation, Lee Hall Mansion, Young's Mill, and the Newsome House, as well as serving as the historical advisor for the Mariner's Museum's U.S.S. *Monitor* Center project. He has taught at the College of William and Mary, and the University of Virginia. He is the author of seven books including *Fort Monroe: The Key to the South*, *C.S.S. Virginia: Mistress of Hampton Roads*, *Civil War on the Peninsula* and *The Battle of the Ironclads*.



The Free State of Jones

The most notorious hotbed of dissent was the "Free State of Jones," so-called because Jones County, Mississippi, allegedly seceded from the Confederacy. According to legends, some 55 to 125 men organized themselves, took over the county, and fought against the C.S.A. Their leader was Newt Knight, the non-slave-holding grandson of a Jones County slaveholder. The "Knight company" was so powerful and well known by late 1863 that Confederate officials dispatched numerous troops to the area and launched two major raids in efforts to subdue them.

The wives, sisters, and daughters of these kin-related uprisers provided shelter and food. So, too, did neighboring and enslaved women. The Knight Company's most famous accomplice was Rachel Knight, a slave of Newt Knight's

grandfather. Rachel was credited with using red pepper and ground glass to confound and kill militia hounds on the trail of deserters. After the war, she gave birth to several light-skinned children reputed to have been fathered by Newt. Rachel and Newt's alliance bound them together for the rest of their lives, creating a multiracial community that endures to this day.

From *The Long Shadow of the Civil War* by Victoria E. Bynum

New York City Civil War Tour

With Bud Livingston

Sunday, October 30th, 2011

Call the Round Table number if you are interested:

718-341 9811

2011 • MEETING SCHEDULE • 2012

• **November 9th** •
Colonel Kevin Farrell
Meade at Gettysburg

• **December 14th** •
Craig Symonds
Lincoln's Admirals

• **January 11th** •
Jeffrey Wert
Lee's Glorious Army

President's Message

Funny thing about weather. It affects us all, from Civil War generals to Civil War round tables. In August of 1862, General Early's brigade was isolated on the north bank of the Rappahannock when the river rose due to heavy rains. "Old Jube" spent several anxious days trying to rescue his command. In January of 1863, General Burnside launched a campaign just as the ground thawed and the heavens opened up. It would become known as the "Mud March", and was a dismal failure. In 2011, just as our annual battlefield tour was about to embark to Virginia, the aftermath of two hurricanes caused flooding and tree damage so severe that we have been forced to postpone the trip until November 11th, 12th, and 13th. The good news is that everyone can make it in November, and the leaves will be at peak color as an added bonus! There still may be a seat or two open if anyone wants to join this incredible tour of Cedar Mountain, Mosby's Confederacy, and Brandy Station with Bud Hall as our guide. What better way to honor Veterans' Day than on a battlefield! Just contact Pat Falci for the latest details. Now let us all keep our powder dry, and our eyes on the heavens!

— *Bill Finlayson*

Book Review

David Ruggles: A Radical Black Abolitionist and the Underground Railroad in New York City

by *Graham Russel Gao Hodges*

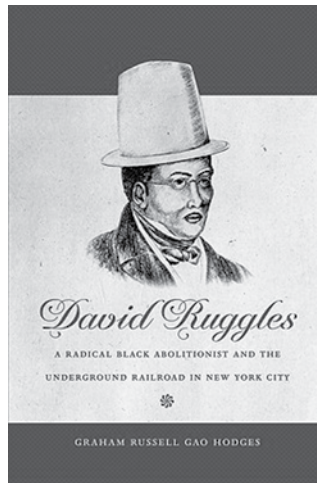
David Ruggles (1810-1849) is barely remembered today, even among people familiar with the pre-war abolition movement and the Underground Railroad in New York. This is sad, because in his short life, suffering from chronic ill health (including blindness) and racial oppression, he was an influential fighter. He was a leader of New York's black opposition to slavery and discrimination with his pen, his printing press, and in the courts, usually before corrupt and racially hostile judges.

Ruggles was the first person in New York to provide shelter and guidance to the escaped Maryland slave, Frederick Augustus Bailey, who soon re-invented himself as Frederick Douglass.

At 2 a.m. on September 3, 1838, Bailey arrived in New York. He had to beware of slave catchers and saw in "every white man an enemy and in every colored man cause for distrust" He spent the night sleeping among barrels on the dock. "He had planned to find a black man named David Ruggles, who headed the New York Committee of Vigilance, an organization famous among slaves fleeing from their bondage."

Historians may have ignored Ruggles, but Douglass never forgot his benefactor. (W.E.B. Du Bois doesn't mention Ruggles in his list of "heroes of color" in

Continued on page 4



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October during the Civil War

1861

8 – A retired Union officer takes evening strolls in Manhattan shielding his general's stars with a dark cloak. His name is Robert Anderson.

12 – The man who crafted the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 (James Murray Mason), along with his buddy from Louisiana, a former New Yorker (John Slidell), slip through the blockade en route to Cuba, setting the stage for the Trent Affair.

1862

2 – The Secretary of War's office in Richmond goes modern and begins their telegraph system which reaches all the way to Warrenton. A Union soldier, in that area during a raid, wires the CSA asking how are things going there.

4 – The Union Navy destroys a salt works in Florida. Confederate civilians will now have to take official pronouncements with a grain of pepper.

1863

15 – The H.L. Hunley takes a look at Davey Jones's Locker and manages to drown its inventor and 7 crew.

27 – Union Colonel Nathaniel Black and Major Vida Blue reach Brown's Ferry and open up the multi-colored Cracker Line.

1864

1 – Rose O'Neal Greenhow, the famous Rebel spy, carrying dispatches and \$2000 in gold, is drowned near New Inlet, N. C.

29 – Forrest and his men capture the Union steamer *Mazeppa*. This incident inspires Stephen Sondheim to write a line for one of the strippers in the musical, *Gypsy*. "Once I was schlepper, now I'm Miss Mazeppa."

Quote, Unquote

"Economisez votre argent Confedere, garçons. Le Sud se levera à nouveau."

Pierre Gustave Toutant Beauregard

From Minor Quotes from Major People

By Alton Blaney (For translation see page 4)

Princeton Rebels (Confederates, that is)

Princeton soon became the most southern of all the Northern colleges. By the 1790s the pattern was set: Forty percent of undergraduates came from below the Mason Dixon Line.

James McDowell (1816), who would become governor of Virginia, was one of several vociferous champions of slavery who attended Princeton. Alfred Iverson (1820) of Georgia, one of 22 antebellum Southern U.S. Senators educated at Princeton, gave ferocious speeches threatening secession. Fellow Virginia student Abel Upshur was expelled for participating in the Riot of 1807, a rebellion against a strict college administration. Later he became U.S. secretary of state, calling slavery "a great positive good, to be carefully protected and preserved," and spearheading the annexation of Texas as a huge new slave state until he was blown up by an exploding cannon on the USS *Princeton* in 1844.

Editor's note, This article should have gone further at this point. The man who created the *Princeton* was none other than John Ericsson, who also created the *Monitor*. His partner Robert Stockton, from an old American family, had forged his own gun for the vessel and named it The Peacemaker. This was the gun that exploded and killed Upshur and others. Stockton blamed Ericsson but he said that's not my gun. His had special reinforcements to prevent such an accident. The Navy, however, refused to pay him for his role in the *Princeton* and, thereafter, he harbored a grudge against the government. He was shunned for his efforts to create the *Monitor* until President Lincoln got involved and a contract was finally let for Ericsson's famous floating battery.

From *The Princeton Alumni Weekly* March 23, 2011

Thanks to George Gering

Dues are due

If you haven't already paid your dues, please send your checks in now. After October, the price rises to \$50. If we don't hear from you by January 1, we will be obliged to drop your name from our mailing lists. Sorry about that.

We now have three yearly dues categories:

	Individual	Family
First Category	\$40	\$60
Second Category	\$50	\$75
Third Category	\$100	\$150

You may choose any appropriate amount to send in, but it will be greatly appreciated if you are able to remit the amounts in the second or third categories. Out-of-towners (75 miles or more) and students (full or part time and under 25) pay \$15.00 unless you are covered by your parent's payment. If you joined up between January and March 2011, you owe only \$15.00. If you joined up in April, May, or June, you get a freebie.

Send dues to Treasurer Bud Livingston 71-16
66th Street, Glendale, NY 11385

Do not include your dues and dinner payment
on the same check.

Continued from page 2

his classic work of 1903. *The Souls of Black Folk*. In his first autobiography (1845), Douglass recalled Ruggles' "vigilance, kindness, and perseverance." His last autobiography (1882) again notes Ruggles' contributions to Douglass and the cause of black freedom. The strength of this book is in its vivid description of the harsh conditions endured by people of color every day, especially in the supposedly progressive states of New York and Massachusetts. Professor Hodges writes, "Generally, N.Y.C. was unsafe for blacks." In 1830, blacks numbered 14,000 in a population of 200,000. "Their percentage of the total had dropped sharply since the initiation of gradual emancipation in 1799, largely because of the declining economic opportunity and worsening racism." Few blacks could vote in N.Y. State because the revised constitution of 1821 imposed a \$250 property qualification for voters. (This was sustained in an 1860 statewide referendum by a vote of almost 2 to 1, with even more opposition in N.Y.C.) This book is well written but I wish that Professor Hodges had the narrative skills of historians like Doris Goodwin and David McCullough. As a New Yorker, this aspect of the city's history draws my interest. The casual reader, though, might find this biography, set in turbulent times, less absorbing than I did.

By Michael Wolf



THE DISPATCH

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE
OF NEW YORK

139-33 250th Street, Rosedale, N.Y. 11422

Translation from Page 1

Save your Confederate money, boys, the South will rise again.

New Recruits

Victor L. Mann, Commander of the General Archibald Gracie Camp No. 958, Sons of Confederate Veterans in NYC.

Angelique R. Landry, treasurer of the NY Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy.

They learned about us at the events at Grant's Tomb.

Fletcher Pratt Winners List

One of our out-of-town members wrote in that he was pleased to see an entire list of Fletcher Pratt winners so that he could get around to reading as many of them as possible. This list appeared in our special 60th Anniversary issue. If anyone else would like a list of the winners, please contact the editor.